

THE UTES ATTEND A PIONEER CELEBRATION

1894

My memory takes me back to a Twenty-Fourth of July celebration held in Payson (Utah) when I was a girl of about fourteen years. It was 1894.

My father, Louis F. White, made a trip to Thistle Valley several days before the celebration, traveling by way of Payson Canyon to invite the Indians of Indianola to join us.

The morning of the celebration he met them at the mouth of Payson Canyon and accompanied them to the street in front of our house, 440 East First South, where I live to this day (1972). I remember them coming into town single file, the bucks riding their best horses in lead and the squaws and papooses following, riding the old mares with colts following.

The squaws, with their quaint saddles, took care of the camp belongings such as blankets, flour sacks filled with food, teepee poles and simple cooking utensils. I cannot tell how many Indians came, but it seems there must have been 50 or 60 of them. They camped in the road in front of our house, seeming to fill the entire block. They took their horses to the old Tithing Yard for feed and water in Peteet-neet Creek. (The Tithing Office was located at 191 North Main and the Tithing Yard was to the west of the office.) There was a big barn there.

LA CRISTINA E IL FIGLIO IN UNA CASA IN IL DESERTO



Typical of the Utes from Indianola who attended the Pioneer Day Celebration in Payson, Utah, 1894. Photo probably by Charles A. Nast, source Denver Public Library Western History Department, produced by Beauty Way, Flagstaff, Az., for Pioneer Trail State Park, Salt Lake City, Utah

The Indians almost stripped our tree of ripe apricots while camped here. To amuse themselves while waiting for the celebration, a few of them (a mixed crowd of young and old) took a big blanket and spread it out on the ground and then sat in a circle around it on the ground. They started gambling with big round Spanish cards, mumbling in their native tongue to each other as the game went on. Each took his turn dealing. After the cards were dealt they threw their money on the blanket. Some bet five cents, some ten cents and a quarter. Then they showed their cards and the winner would gather up his share of the money. This went on for a long time.

I remember the Indians were wearing long black hair, braided in two braids and hanging down in front of their shoulders, black wide-rimmed hats, with beads and Indian blankets wrapped around them — and in July, think of it! — and moccasins.

On the morning of the Twenty-Fourth just at sunrise the martial band played while the stars and stripes of the American flag were being hoisted on the top of the liberty pole in the center of the yard at the tithing office.

About ten o'clock the parade formed in the street west of the Hyrum Lemmon home (116 East First South). There were several floats representing the business houses and the Sunday School floats, pioneer floats, rags and tags and horrors.

The martial band walked in the parade. They had two snare drums played by William (Bill) Patten and Hyrum Reece; and two flutes played by Isaac Hancock and Henry Badham. Freeman Tanner had a big flea-bitten gray horse they called Mountain Gray that always appeared in the rag-tag wagon, hitched to a little pack mule named Jimmie that belonged (communal property) to John and Jack Dixon and Ammon Nebeker.

The parade went down and up the principal streets of Payson, namely First East, Main Street and Depot Street, and then on to the old Christopher Dixon Grove on the

outskirts of town, Fourth North Street just east of Fourth West Street, there they held a program. This was a native grove of Boxelder and Cottonwood trees located about 150 yards east of the Ammon Nebeker Grove. It was a fitting place for the Pioneer Day celebration since the location was near the first campsite of the founders of Payson (1850).

There was a well just a little way east of the Dixon home with a well-curb and a rope and bucket and two tin cups for the crowd to drink from. I remember the smell of wild peppermint and burdocks that rose up from where the crowd milled about and trampled on them.

The committee always put up a large rope swing fastened high up in the straight trees for the younger girls and boys to swing in. A loose rope about thirty feet long was tied to the swing, with two husky boys on either end of the rope kept the swinger going high up into the branches of the tree. I can almost feel the sensation of swinging now.

During the program Will Harper of Spring Lake Villa gave a stump speech. I thought it was the funniest speech I had ever heard. In the afternoon prizes were given. One prize was a large blue silk handkerchief offered to the girl with the darkest eyes. Henrietta Douglass was about to get the prize when someone brought a little papoose girl to the contest and the papoose got the prize. The crowd was entertained with half dozen Indians playing on tom-toms that represented some kind of war dance and on a bass drum belonging to the Payson Brass Band.

The men amused themselves by pitching disks and foot racing. I recall that with two other girls I wandered through the west orchard out to the old rock wall fence where some Payson boys were having a horse race in the road. I also saw the Indians with their money, blankets and beads.

Payson was noted for foot racing, horse racing and gambling. After the race my cousin, Ray Knight traded for the horse the Indians ran in the race. The son of Ponawats owned the horse.

The committee had two long tables set up under the

trees and served a boiled chicken dinner with noodles and rice and all of the delicious things that make a complete dinner.

The committee also had a refreshment stand on the southeast corner of the grove made with native lumber and wagon covers over the top. They served home-made ice cream and lemonade in the afternoon before everyone left the grove. The Indians loved it. I remember seeing the ice cream freezers grinding away, turned by boys who received a dish of ice cream and a big sweet cracker before the crowd was served. I remember how the waiters would call from the booth, "Come on up everybody, get a glass of ice cold lemonade, made in the shade, stirred with a spade, by an old maid, the best lemonade that ever was made!"

The celebration wound up with a dance for the young folks. It was held in the second floor of the old George Hancock building on the southeast corner of Main and First North streets. Every dancer was given a nice big orange, which was considered the real treat of the day.

I remember Isaac Hancock and John Badham played the fiddles, Mr. Hancock keeping time with his foot and Henry Badham playing the flute for the round or square dances. George Matson called the square dances. We were allowed two waltzes during the evening and our boy friends brought us five cents worth of candy in a paper sack. The committee furnished refreshments that consisted of stick candy and squares of sugared pink popcorn. . . . Minnie White Douglas won first place for this essay in a contest sponsored by Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1925, directed by Kate Carter, national president.

